

Project Managers' Advisory Group

MINUTES October 17, 2011

Attending:

(* = by phone)

Kathy Bromead	EPMO
Bob Giannuzzi	EPMO
Jesus Lopez*	EPMO
Valerie Maat*	EPMO
Charles Richards	EPMO
Janet Stewart*	ITS
Todd Russ*	ITS
John McShane*	ITS
Lucy Cornelius*	DPI
Vicky Kumar*	OSC
Barbara Swartz*	DHHS DPH
Gary Lapio*	DHHS DIRM
Sara Liles*	DMH/DD/SAS
Gary Imes*	DHHS
Lawrence Sanders*	ESC
Lloyd Slominsky*	Dept. of Corrections
Colleen McCarthy*	SOS

Bob Giannuzzi welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Bob solicited and received approval of the September minutes.

Jesus Lopez reported that Ginger Taylor (no longer with the State), a PMP Exam Prep class attendee, passed the test administered under the revised exam scope. Jesus views her success as indication that the current training modules will not require major editing for next spring's class cycle.

Bob shared the following PDU opportunities available through PMI (since updated). The NCPMI Annual Event is sold out. Bob again reminded the group that the various PMI Communities of Practice (PMI members must subscribe) offer several live and recorded free webinars.

Venue	Speaker	Date/Topic
Annual Event		<u>Oct 19 (8:15 am)</u>
General Membership	Brian Leach	<u>Nov 17</u> (6:00 PM) Improving the Quality of your Microsoft Project 2010 Schedule
Public Sector LIG		<u>Nov 3</u> (6:00 PM) TBD
PMO Committee		No meeting scheduled
Leadership		No meeting scheduled

Committee		
Information Systems Committee		No meeting scheduled
NCPMI free webinar		<u>Oct 31</u> (noon) TAKE CONTROL! Best Practices in Project Scheduling with Microsoft® Project 2010
Earned Value Mgt CoP free webinar	Susan Wood, Eleanor Haupt	(Recording) Integrated Baseline Reviews

The progress of the EPMO work groups was discussed next.

- **SDLC** to address integration of alternate SDLCs (e.g., Agile) into the current process/workflow. Per Gaye Mays, the group's recommendation has been finalized, and they are looking for a pilot project. They may need to test on a project less than \$500K just to test the process.
- **Agency Procurement** to develop a common (within agency) procurement process. Kathy advised that the group has continued to work on the RFP process of evaluation planning and scoring.
- **Business Case** to develop guidelines and provide training on justifying projects based on cost/benefits analysis. Bob reported that the training presentation draft has been updated to include sample project data applied to the template. The group next meets on 10/25 and the volunteer testers will be invited.

Lucy Cornelius reported on Methodology Task Group activity. The group is continuing the development of a template to itemize and describe project Business Functional Requirements and will be requiring more feedback.

This year's EPMO customer survey deadline has been extended to October 31. Kathy advised that 52 had been submitted to date and encouraged additional participation. The link to the EPMO survey is found at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GQ937L2>.

Kathy provided feedback on the NASCIO annual conference held October 2-5. She represented NC on a panel discussing effective project oversight. Based on feedback from the 100 or so participants, our process is probably one of the best of the states. NC's two project finalists did not win the awards. More detail on the conference is available at <http://www.nascio.com>, including write-ups on all the finalists and videos of the winners.

There was no new news on the EPMO website. Kathy projected the next quarterly updates to some date in December.

Bob advised that the EPMO is open to suggestions on what to publish on its Communication Hub. Lucy Cornelius recommended that training notifications be pushed out to subscribers.

Charles Richards shared that last month's PPM tool server patches (enhanced security) were successfully installed.

At next month's meeting Mike Fenton will discuss the Hosting Exception process his team has been developing.

Bob encouraged the group to volunteer to share best practices and lessons learned at this forum. Lessons learned from recently closed projects are highlighted below.

Meeting adjourned at 3:58 PM.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, November 21, 2011 at 3:30
333 Six Forks Road Conference Room 5 or (919) 981-5581

<https://its.ncgovconnect.com/r96139571/>

APPENDIX

Lessons Learned Documentation

Exhibit A

DPI – Computerized Instructional Management System

Initiation Phase:

Topic	Lessons Learned
1. Business Case / Project Charter	Ensure that the business case for the project is convincing and that there are no other directives in place for the same type of project. Ensure that the project charter specifies the amount of money that will be spent each year on the project.
2. Benefits	Ensure that a business analysis is performed and that the benefits outweigh the costs.
3. Procurement Plan (procurement strategy....build vs. buy)	Find out what kind of procurement needs to be done such as RFP, RFQ, and Amendment. Ensure that the budget is appropriate and that the procurement process is navigated successfully. Procurement process took longer than expected.
4. Project Approval Process	It took this statewide project about 2 months to get approved through the PMC. Ensure that you have the right amount of time.
5. Managing Sponsor Expectations	Set realistic expectations with the sponsor. Create a realistic schedule and stick to it.
6. Managing Customer Expectations	Set realistic expectations with the sponsor. Create a realistic schedule and stick to it.

Planning & Design Phase:

Topic	Lessons Learned
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1. Updated Business Case	Always update the business case once the deliverables have been agreed upon.
2. Updated Budget	Ensure that the budget reflects the work that is actually being performed.
3. Managing Sponsor Expectations	Communicate problems when deadlines are set, not when they are missed. Keep sponsor apprised of the progress of the current phase
4. Managing Customer Expectations	Communicate problems when deadlines are set, not when they are missed.
5. Risk Management	Write, up, and state all associated risks and constantly keep them before management until resolved.
6. Issue Management	Don't think that issues will just eventually work out; ensure that you have a resolution for each issues by having frequent status meetings throughout the project.
7. Monthly Status Reporting	Set up plan successfully from the beginning and stay current as much as possible.
8. Staffing Plan	Create a realistic staffing plan and keep it up to date.
9. Project Schedule / Milestones / Project Planning	Create a baseline schedule, but include as much information as possible.
10. ETS System Design Document	Work hand in hand with EA from ITS to ensure that the T ASD is acceptable; T ASD needs to be as detailed as possible.
11. Requirements Mapping	Ensure that the requirements are mapped correctly.

Execution & Build Phase:

Topic	Lessons Learned
1. Resource Management (internal & external resources)	Try to prevent a cutback in available resources(especially technical)
2. Project Communication	Ensure that this is clear communication of project management processes to all stakeholders; know the stakeholders expected timelines, state goals and vision clearly so that you will not have to go down a couple of dead end paths; determine appropriate communications mechanisms and approach among teams and implement.
3. Change Management / Change Request	Requirements need to be managed well as scope creep seems to be prevalent in big projects. There were synchronization problems in the procurement area; only work on tasks that are under contract
4. SLA Development (service level agreement)	Ensure that you review and become familiar with it so that there will be no surprises if something happens to the system.
5. Pilot	Pilot went exceptionally well in that the product did meet expectation and Thinkgate did a better job of data integration than almost anybody yet.
6. Testing (test execution, verification & validation, test scripts, test cases)	Allow for some testing to be done in house. Do not depend on the vendor to do all of the testing and validation. Check for connectivity and performance issues.
7. Requirements Verification & Validation	The business users should verify and validate the requirements before the system is implemented.
8. Hosting Provider (setting up environments)	Take time to ensure the environments are set up correctly for the project and that support is provided.
9. Backup / DR Strategy	Always have a well defined backup/DR strategy from the vendor and/or hosting facility.

Implementation Phase:

Topic	Lessons Learned
1. Managing Sponsor Expectations	Receive product acceptance from the sponsor; project was completed; stayed within budget
2. Managing Customer Expectations	Customers were very pleased to be able to administer online testing and receive the necessary reports.
3. Project Schedule / Milestones / Project Planning	Monitor milestones and project schedule very closely.
4. Resource Management (internal & external resources)	Allocate appropriately and collaborate to define support and processes for who do what and when; this should be a collaboration between CTE, TS, and Thinkgate; reorganizations does not help during a project
5. Vendor Management / Vendor	Review RFP and SOW to ensure that the vendor is delivering the expected

Performance / Vendor Deliverables	deliverables.
6. Project Deliverables (refer to the list of deliverables in the PPM Tool that the PM said would be delivered)	Ensure the deliverables in the PPM tool.
7. Project Cost vs. Budget Cost	Stayed within budget
8. Change Management / Change Request	Ensure that change management is documented. Follow the change management and change request procedures diligently. Manage change control more accurately.
9. Implementation of Backup / DR	Ensure that the Production and QA environments are not in the same location.
10. Implementation of SLA	Ensure that all stakeholders are in agreement.
11. Hosting Provider	Start very early to secure a hosting provider; ensure that all of the technical specifications are provided.
12. Production Readiness (software / hardware, process, personnel)	Ensure that the product is ready by executing stress and load testing; Product did meet expectations.
13. Training (user, admin, etc)	Provide all the necessary training for the users of the system; don't expect them to learn it once it has been rolled out; ensure consistencies in training material; ensure the data is loaded correctly.
14. Other	The application was implemented across the entire state in a relatively short period of time; Rollout was successful to 100% of all the LEAs.

General Comments:

Topic	Lessons Learned
1. Collaboration	Good collaboration is necessary between Thinkgate and ITS
2. Project Management Processes	Clear communication of project management processes to all stakeholders is necessary
3. Priorities	Ensure coherent understanding of agency priorities in relation to the project
4. Teamwork	There is strength in teamwork; successful partnership with Thinkgate
5. Unrealistic Expectations	Don't have unrealistic expectations of state level users

Exhibit B

DOT - Electronic CRASH Reporting (Non-TraCS)

A. What was learned from the project?

1. The sample Crash Reports (supplied to the LEA by DOT IT) should be transmitted from the client immediately after installation – this will confirm that any communication issues are uncovered as soon as possible.
2. Initial software vendor implementations have proven to be the most complicated and resource intensive and have taken significantly longer than planned.
3. LEA must be proactive in managing their Vendor relationship; including the schedule, design and timeliness of resolving test issue.
4. LEAs need to clearly understand that the Supplemental report process is a full replacement of original crash report.

B. What went well with the project?

1. Confirmed that after the initial vendor deployment, subsequent implementations become significantly less complex and time consuming.
2. Project documentation developed was clear and helpful with few corrections required
3. UAT testing works best when the Crash reports are entered by officers familiar with crash reporting
4. All vendor interaction should be driven through the LEA – the DOT team needs to be careful not direct/authorize vendor solution design points. DOT team should only answer questions the ECRS requirements - only the LEA should be giving the vendor direction on the LEA solution.

C. What did not go well with the project?

1. LEAs consistently under estimated the project schedule and milestone dates – a gap analysis with the DOT Team could help them better understand the requirements and differences with their current process.
2. Care should be taken in testing the crash diagrams - the LEA can use a variety of settings when creating their diagram files, so quality and dimensions should be confirmed early in the test cycle.
3. The 24 DMV defined UAT Test cases need to be entered carefully by the LEAs – problems with the data entry caused several false positives test issues, UAT testers should be knowledge and comfortable with the DMV-349 format.

D. Words of wisdom for future projects.

1. A teaming approach worked well with the LEAs; this built trust and facilitated issue resolution.
2. Regular scheduled status meeting worked well – gave everyone a chance to touch base at least once a week.
3. Keep meeting short and issue driven – this kept attendance up and maintain the lines of communication. If you’ve covered the agenda items, end the meeting – sometimes a 30 minutes status meeting only lasted 5 minutes.

Exhibit C

DOT - SPOT Assistance – Prioritization 2.0

Execution & Build Phase:

Topic	Lessons Learned
1. Project Schedule / Milestones / Project Planning	With an iterative development/build/test cycle, it is harder to predict when something will be “done”, as it is subject to customer feedback as well as the normal estimates for how long it will take to develop and test a given function.

	Allow extra time for customer involvement in this process.
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Implementation Phase:

Topic	Lessons Learned
1. Project Deliverables (refer to the list of deliverables in the PPM Tool that the PM said would be delivered)	The PM should provide the deliverables in the appropriate phase. I discovered now that the business requirements were supposed to be documented, per the PPM tool (per original PM decision). It makes little sense to go back and document the business requirements in detail now, after execution and build is already complete. Doing it now is just paperwork, rather than an exercise to help clarify and refine the requirements.

Exhibit D

DOT - PCI Compliance

Initiation Phase:

Topic	Lessons Learned
1. Level 1 Budget	Ensure the procurement is part of the Level-1 budget, as it was accidentally left off by the first PM during PPM budget population.
2. Benefits	Realistic benefits need to be used, with traceable data to substantiate the claim. The first PM had benefits that were orders of magnitude larger than any later ability to quantify could produce.

Planning & Design Phase:

Topic	Lessons Learned
1. Updated Budget	Again, qualify the budget for accuracy with procurement, resources, and vendor services to ensure consistency.
2. Monthly Status Reporting	Variances are NOT always problems, as some oversight may continually suggest. Variances can be to the benefit of the project, and to the State, and should be allowed to exist as such without always having to have a “corrective action plan” in place.
3. Staffing Plan	This is a very burdensome tool to use, and the differences in rounding and actuals between the Agency financial system, this spreadsheet, and PPM, make for a nearly impossible reconciliation of exact numbers.

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2. Vendor Management / Vendor Performance / Vendor Deliverables	Increased flexibility should be considered within the Change Request process when dealing with vendor services that may need to be rescheduled, last minute. It is very administratively-heavy to produce change requests that take a lot of time to formally approve when a vendor needs an additional month due to a scheduling conflict. If the overall schedule is not compromised, only some activity within a phase, consider extending greater latitude to the PM to make judgment calls.
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General Comments:

Topic	Lessons Learned
1. PPM	<p>It is a very, very poor tool! If the State is serious about its project reporting mandate, than it needs to be serious about its tool selection and commit to a modernization project, especially since it requires PM's to use its (EPMO) system. If we consistently argue budget issues, we consistently do nothing. Somehow, the funds need to be allocated.</p> <p>PPM is a hindrance to accurate and maturing project management effectiveness.</p>